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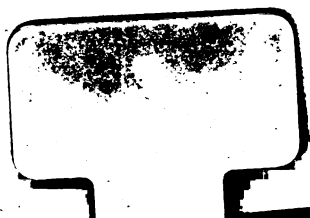
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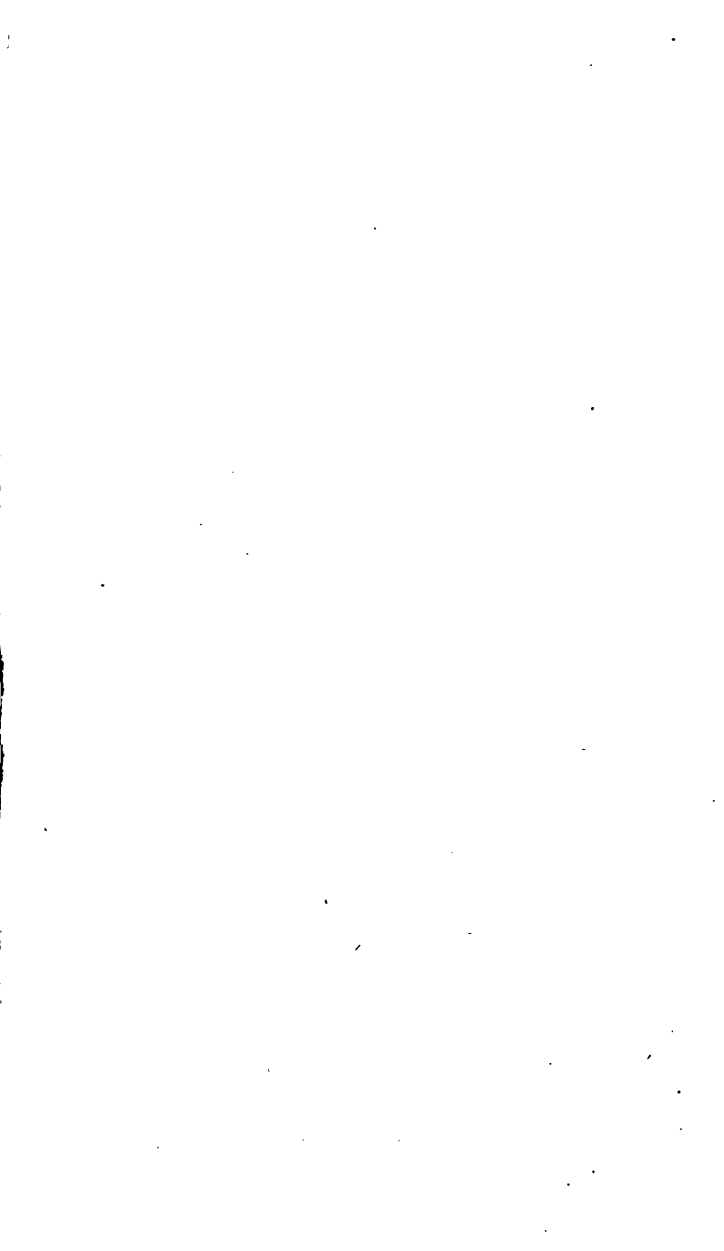


Malone. B.
162.















BELTESHAZZAR;
OR, THE
HEROIC JEW:
A
DRAMATIC POEM.

*Neque enim lex æquior ulla
Quàm necis artifices arte perire sua. Ovid.*



L O N D O N:
Printed for THEODORE SANDERS, at the Bell
in Little Britain. 1727.



Dramatis Personæ.

M E N,

King *Darius*, or *Cyaxares*, the *Mede*.

Beltesbazzar, or *Daniel*, 1st President.

Presid. 2d.

Presid. 3d.

Princee *Belesis*, 1st of the Princes.

Prince 2d, and others of the Princes.

Sballum, a noble Jew, Intimate of *Beltesbazzar*.

Sbemaiah, *Sballum*'s Friend.

Seraiah, Priest of the House of *Elsazar*.

Jezrabiab, chief Singer.

Three Peasants, *Babylonians*.

W O M E N,

Mandane, Queen of *Darius*.

Aristone, Wife of *Beltesbazzar*.

Presid. 2d's Wife and two Daughters.

A T T E N D A N T S.

Scene B A B Y L O N.

BELTE-





BELTESHAZZAR;

OR, THE

Heroic J E W.



Sballum. Shemaiab.

Shal.  My *Shemaiab*, thou, and I, have known
The Joys of Friendship long! The strong-
est Cords
Of mutual Love have join'd our Hearts;
and we
Have reap'd the Benefit in ev'ry State:

Pleasures

6 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

Pleasures imparted have been still encreas'd,
And Sympathy has lessen'd every grief!

Shem. Believe me, *Shallum*, thou hast been my Guide,
My Stay, a constant Source of new Delights:
For thou art form'd to love and entertain.
Not Kings, amidst the Pleasures of a Court,
Can boast a Happiness that equals mine.
May nought, 'till Death's Approach, the Knot untie!

Shal. There is no Cause of Fear: We both are try'd;
Besides, strict Virtue is the solid Basis
Whereon our Friendship stands, which never shook
In all the Tempests of an adverse State.
And now, methinks, the Skies begin to clear,
So long o'erspread with thick and darksome Clouds;
I have the Prospect of a glorious Change,
Which will occasion universal Joy
To *Abraham's* faithful Offspring, who still wait
To see the promis'd Time of their Return,
With loud Hosannas, to their native Land:
Then they'll rebuild that Temple which their Foes,
With impious Hands demolish'd, and adore
Their God, according to the Laws receiv'd
From *Moses*, our great Prophet. Then, my Friend,
Our Nation shall no longer be despis'd,
Insulted, and oppress'd by Worshipers
Of Dunghil-Gods, to whom we sell a Prey,
Because we shamefully forsook our own,
Worthy alone to be ador'd by Men,
And with vile pagan Rites profan'd his Courts.
Then once again, perhaps, we shall excel

The

The Nations round our Coasts, and none shall dare
To crush our growing Power; because our God,
At length appeas'd, returns to take our part.

Shem. The Thought is pleasing; but alas! I fear
I shall not share the Bliss. Why did I say
I fear'd it? For, if first I be remov'd
To *Abram's* Bosom, happy Seat of those
Who cleave to *Abram's* God; may I not thence,
With an exulting Joy, behold my Friends,
These captive Jews, freed from the galling Yoke,
Fix'd in the Land that flows with Milk and Honey?

Sbal. 'Tis not, indeed, for us to set the Time,
Which he, who only can Salvation grant,
Has fix'd, and keeps a Secret in his Breast:
But sure our present State may give us Hope
It is not so remote as you suggest.

Shem. From whence arise these joyful Expectations?

Sbal. We have a Prince whose Counsels are a Law,
Even to *Darius*; of his Worth appriz'd,
H'as plac'd him next the Throne; and he's so good,
He cannot fail t'improve, on our Behalf,
Th'Advantage of his Station, when he finds
A proper Season to espouse our Cause.

Shem. He may, perhaps, in time successfully
Attempt to raise us from our low Estate.

Sbal. 'Till then, *Shemaiah*, this should be our Work,
To animate our Brethren in their Bonds,
Excite them to behave as those who claim
The Honour of Descent from *Abram*,
The Friend of God, our fam'd Progenitor.

And

8. BELTESHAZZAR; or,

And let the social Virtues in our Lives
Shine daily, with sincere Devotion join'd:
Let's supplicate the One supreme, whose Name
Alone's *Jehovah*, tho' he has delay'd,
That now he'd triumph o'er the Idol *Bel*,
And all the *Vanities* of *Babylon*.

Let's recommend, with Fervour, to his Care,
This wise, this virtuous Man, on whom our Eyes
Are fix'd for Help, we've long in vain desir'd;
That he may keep his Post in spite of Envy,
Which often prompts the Wicked to attempt
To undermine the Best, when rais'd above 'em.

Shem. You, *Shallum*, often are in Privacy,
Conferring with the Prince; and know, perhaps,
Some great Designs he's form'd, which, if disclos'd,
And made the Subject of our common Talk,
Might blast our Hopes, and sink us in Dispair.

Shal. Thus much I may assure you, as our Cause
Lies near his Heart; so this has been the Theme
Of many Conversations, and I'm now,
By his Appointment, going to his House,
In order to concert some further Measures.
If things should take no unexpected Turn,
You may depend upon't you'll soon hear more.

Shem. Thou Messenger of Peace, go on, and prosper!
My Duty to the Prince, and let him know
My hearty Wishes for Heav'n's noblest Gifts
Shall e'er attend him.

The Heroic J E W.

9

O! May his Fame, and Happiness encrease,
Nor any secret Foe disturb his Peace;
And may he late ascend to Joys that ne'er will cease!



Pres. 2d. Pres. 3d.

Pres. 3. **H**OW fares my Friend? Methinks your Looks
bespeak

Some anxious Cares, or overwhelming Grief,
Which has dispell'd all Gladness from your Breast,
And e'er your Face has spread a gloomy Cloud.
Wherefore this Sadness now the Storm is past,
And our Affairs begin to smile again?

Pres. 2. O! 'Twas a direful Prospect which we had
(To recollect it fills my Soul with Horror,
Opens the Wounds afresh but newly clos'd)
When in the midst of a luxurious Feast,
Belshazzar trembling, saw his mortal Foe,
With Sword in Hand, enter the Palace Gates;
When *Cyrus* laid the Monarch at his Feet,
Welt'ring in Blood, and we were forc'd to bow
Before the mighty Conquerour, and receive
A Stranger for our King! But this I own
Is not the Burden which now weighs me down:
'Tis not my lot to reign, and I'm content.

Cjaxeres,

Cyaxeres, the *Mede*, should sway the Sceptre ;
 Nor should I with Reluctance bow before him,
 If he would keep the Publick Good in view,
 And in his Service those alone employ
 Whom Merit recommends : But when I see
 My Countrymen despis'd, all set below
 This worthless *Daniel*, our First President,
 It breaks my Peace, and sits uneasy on me.

Pres. 3. I must confess I've wish'd it were not so ;
 The King had surely made a wiser Choice
 By far, if you, my Lord, had fill'd his Place.

Pres. 2. I ne'er should envy one that's rais'd above me,
 Provided he would manage well his Trust.
 But what's this wond'rous Fav'rite *Belteshazzar* ?
 A Jew, a Captive ; nay, still worse, a Man
 In whom mean Artifice supplies the Place
 Of solid Wisdom, and Integrity ;
 For which it passes with the thoughtless Herd,
 Ever impos'd upon by specious Shews.
 Nay, ev'n the King himself has been misled
 By this false glaring Light, who more confides
 In *Daniel*, than in all his faithful Friends.

Pres. 3. He is, indeed, the Oracle of State ;
 And to oppose his Counsels is in vain.

Pres. 2. The Consequence of this the Land will rue,
 Unless prevented ere it be too late :
 For should the bold aspiring Man go on,
 Soon will he undermine th' unwary King ;
 And when he sees his dark Designs are ripe
 For Execution, seize his Master's Crown ;

And

And introduce a dreadful Scene of Blood.

But see the Prince *Belefsis*.——



Pr. 2. Pr. 3. Prince Belefsis.

Pres. 3. MY Lord, I joy to see you.

Pr. Bel. I came this Morning to attend your
Lordship,

In token of the most sincere Regard,
Which I am always ready to evince ;
But beg I mayn't intrude ; you are engag'd
In private Business.

Pres. 3. No, indeed, my Lord,
My Friend and I were only talking o'er
The present Posture of our State-Affairs.

Pres. 2. The Fav'rite was our Subject, he who rules
Our King *Darius*, while we stand for Cyphers.

Pr. Bel. The Theme it self, my Lord, must be ungrate-
ful ;

But if you could devise some happy Means
For crushing this our Foe, we all shou'd reap
The Benefit, our King, our Country too.

Pres. 3. Believe I am your Friend ; in me repose
Your utmost Trust : And if I e'er prove false,
Disclose what may, when known, be hurtful to you,

My

12 **BELTESHAZZAR ; or,**

My Life shall pay the Forfeit. Yet, my Lords,
 You'll give me leave to speak my Sentiments :
 Our Case, at present, seems t'admit of nought
 But Patience, which may mitigate our Pains,
 Tho' 'twill not heal our Wounds. Who knows, but yet
 Some Scene may open, which shall give the King
 A different Turn of Mind, and change the Course
 Of his Affections: We may then be thought
 Worthy of more Regard. Or Time it self
 An Alteration in him may produce :
 For oft we see that Love, not built on Reason,
 Is fickle, and unconstant like the Wind ;
 How strong soe'er the Passion, it will cease,
 When Novelty no longer can excite it.

Pr. Bel. 'Tis true, my Lord, the common Ills of Life
 Are to be born with Patience; but to bow
 With low Submission at the Feet of one
 That ought to do you homage, to behold
 One thus exalted who's unmeet to fill
 The lowest Post of Honour, sure must fire
 The noble Blood that flows within your Veins.

Pres. 2. We've seen with what Contempt this haughty
 Man
 Already treats us, flush'd with his Success ;
 And tamely still to bear the galling Yoke,
 Would argue Meanness hardly to be match'd
 In vulgar Minds.

Pres. 3. But you'll allow, my Lords,
 That Reason should preside o'er all our Ways :
 To aim at what appears above our reach

Betrays

Betrays our Folly, makes us like the Brutes,
Whom by their Appetites alone are sway'd.

Pres. 2. But your Conclusion is not fairly drawn,
That therefore we should bear this foul Disgrace,
And seek for no Redress; we then should be
Like the most stupid of the brutal Kind.

And Reason tells me that Delays are vain:
For sure no prudent Man would please himself
With idle Dreams of Freedom from the Yoke,
And let th' encreasing Weight quite press him down.

Pr. Bel. My Lord, you argue well, if there are Means,
As surely Means there are for your Relief,
You ought to use them while they're in your Power.
The Mariner tost on the boisterous Ocean,
Seeing his Vessel shatter'd by the Storm,
With Joy embraces the first friendly Plank,
On which he may be waisted safe to Shore.

Pres. 2. O! Think you saw this hated Rival fix'd [turn-
ing to the 3d.

Upon the Throne! What could we then expect,
But to be treated as most abject Slaves?
For armed thus with Power, he would effect
Whate'er his rooted Malice should contrive.

Pres. 3. Heav'n grant my Eyes may never see that Day!

Pr. Bel. And yet, my Lord, you are content to sit
With folded Arms, and wait for its Approach.

Pres. 3. My Lords, I own I am at length alarm'd,
Like one just waken'd from the pleasing Dream
Of Safety, that's with Dangers compass'd round;
And in our common Cause I'll now embark

B

With

14. BELTESHAZZAR; Or,

With you. But well we know the Princes also hate
This *Daniel*; they would join their Forces to abase him.
Then let's, my Lords, make choice of those in whom
We may repose our Trust for Secrefie;
T'affist us in this most important Business;
Th' Event of which must be our Weal, or Woe.

Pres. 2. The Motion you have made, I well approve;
I've chosen some already, to attend
Our Consultations, brave and honest Men.
You know, my Lord, the Princes meet to day,
By Order of *Darius*, to dispatch
Some great Affairs. As soon as we're adjourn'd,
I'll lead you to the Place of Rendezvous;
Where we'll consult what Step we next shall take.

Pres. 3. My Lords, I will attend you; but I beg
We may with Caution all along proceed:
For if our Counsels are too soon disclos'd,
Instead of helping us, they'll prove our Ruin.

Pres. 2. Fear not, my Lord, we'll be upon our Guard:
Let Courage then, and Constancy of Mind
Equal your Prudence, and Integrity.

So shall we win the Day, and seize the Prize;
Let *Beltesbazzar* fall, we soon shall rise.



Belte-



Belteshazzar's House.

Belteshazzar. Seraiah.

Belt. **W**HAT Tidings, my *Seraiah*?
Ser. My good Lord,

'Twould grieve me much, should I be thought by you
Officious, or unmindful of my Duty.

Belt. Speak then without Reserve, my honest Friend ;
I know thou mean'st me well.

Ser. There's nought, my Lord, I ever yet posses'd,
I held so dear as you ; 'twas with Delight,
Too great to be express'd, I saw you rais'd,
Prime Minister of State ! With equal Joy
I've since observ'd how you have been the Care
Of kind, indulgent Heav'n, who o'er your Ways
Presides, and crowns your Labours with Success.
Nor is there Cause of Doubt (I flatter not)
Whether your Conduct will be still the same ;
O may your Happiness ! But such as you
Must be expos'd to wicked Men's Attempts,
Who would rejoyce the Virtuous to depress.
And since such Men, the only Foes you have,
More publickly, than heretofore, profess
Their Enmity, I look'd upon my self
In Duty bound to acquaint your Lordship with it ;

B 2

And

16 BELTESHAZZAR; OR,

And let your Goodness plead for my Excuse.

Belt. That Conduct, my *Seraiab*, needs it not,
Which flows from sense of Duty, cordial Love.

[Enter Servant.]

Serv. My Lord, *Jezrabiab* waits to know if he
may have Admittance.

Ser. I order'd his Attendance on your Lordship,
That he might sing the Song he late compos'd,
And set to Notes most cheerful, yet most solemn :
I am perswaded you'll be entertain'd.

Belt. Tell him I am at leisure.—

[Enter Jez. and sings.]

S O N G.

JEHOVAH promis'd he would free
His People from their Slavery.

They'll soon return to Canaan's Land,

There joyful in his Temple stand ;

With ten-string'd Instruments proclaim

Aloud their great Deliverer's Fame.

When this Salvation they receive,

Their Eyes and Ears they'll scarce believe :

The then unlook'd-for Bliss will seem

At first, a soft, deluding Dream ;

But they shall find 'tis real Day,

That Sighs and Tears are fled away.

Belt. The Musick's fine, *Seraiab* ; but the Theme
Transports my Soul ! I'm lost in Ecstasy !
And tho' I'm view'd by some thro' Envy's Glass,

Who

Who would remove me were it in their Power ;
I hope, e're long to be the Instrument
Of this Deliverance to my native Country.

Ser. May Heav'n support you in the great Design !



Belteshazzar alone.

WHAT is this Life to Man ? A Scene of Cares,
Of num'rous Dangers, and incessant Toils,
Ev'n when the sovereign Ruler of the World
Exalts us far above the common Sort.
The higher we are rais'd, the more we fear :
Envy creates us many spiteful Foes,
Who from the Precipice would throw us down,
And triumph in our Ruin. Yet I hope,
The only living God whom I adore,
Whose Approbation is my highest Aim,
Will still preserve me from each threaten'd Ill,
And crown my future Days with Peace and Joy :
If not, I yield my self with Chearfulness,
And all I hold most dear, to his Dispose,
From whose rich Goodness all my Comforts flow.
Let the Remainder of my Life on Earth
Be bright, or gloomy, 'tis my firm Resolve
To acquiesce in my great Ruler's Pleasure ;
So shall I find he amply will reward
My faithful Service, and Integrity.

B 3

Belt.



Belteshazzar. Arifone.

Belt. MY Arifone,

The Sharer of my Pleasures, and my Pains ;
Perpetual Fountain of domestic Joys ;
Indulgent Heav'n be prais'd that fix'd my Eyes
At first on thee, and gave thee to my Arms !

Arif. My dearest Lord, if you're so entertain'd,
What Cause have I with Raptures to survey
Th' exalted Happiness I owe to you !
At first your charming Mein, your graceful Air,
The Grandeur which appears in all your Words,
In all your Actions, quite subdu'd my Heart.
And thus prepar'd, I listen'd to your Voice,
As to an Angel's, while you turn'd my Feet
Into the Paths of everlasting Life :
You taught me to renounce those Idol-Gods
To whom I had too long blind Homage paid :
To worship him who is the *First* and *Last*,
Who spread the Heav'ns above, and built the Earth,
And sways the Scepter over all his Works ;
To reverence, and to love his sacred Name :
This made my Passion heav'nly and divine ;
I look'd upon you as my Guardian-Angel.
From noblest Motives then at your Request,
I soon became your faithful, tender Wife ;
Since that, how sweetly have we trod Life's Path together !

Belt.

Belt. My lovely Fair, 'tis a most pleasing Scene
Thro' which we've pass'd : But what may be to come
He only knows, who orders our Affairs ;
And wisely has concealed from our View
Future Events. This we should call to mind ;
The brightest Day may soon be overcast,
The Fruits be blasted which have rais'd our Hopes.

Arist. What means my Lord ?

Belt. Be not concern'd, my Love, for I foresee
No other Dangers than have always been
Th' Attendants of my Station. But thou know'st
I've many spiteful Foes, who envy all
The Honours unto which my Prince has rais'd me,
Envy me thee, as well indeed they may ;
For thou might'st make the greatest Monarch happy
That rules beneath the Skies : How far their Power
And Subtilty may reach, we cannot say.
And it becomes us not to be secure ;
But while we pay the Tribute of our Praise
To the perpetual Source of all our Joys,
We should provide for what we may endure,
That nought may drive us from the Paths of Virtue.
Farewel ; I hasten to the Council-House ;
The Business there dispatch'd, I shall return
To her whose sweet Society relieves
My Mind, so oft fatigu'd with Thought and Care.





Aristone alone.

THOU best of Husbands; and thou best of Men;
 Thy heav'nly Language always charms my Soul,
 Improves my Understanding, warms my Breast!
 This Lecture of divine Philosophy
 I'll treasure in my Heart, and learn of thee
 To grow in Virtue, till my Soul shall rise,
 And take her Seat beyond the azure Skies.
 There none can dwell, till wash'd from ev'ry Stain
 Of Sin, they perfect Purity obtain.
 There shall we both thro' endless Ages shine,
 With an unsullied Lustre, and be all divine.



The



The Street.

Two Peasants.

1. *Peas.* **W**HAT News, honest Friend?

2. *Peas.* Truly, Sir, I am no Newsmonger. So long as I can have Three good Meals a-day for my self and Family, whole Apparel, and a Dwelling to defend us from the Injuries of the Weather, the Product of my Labour and Industry, I sha'n't concern my self much about public Affairs.

1. *Peas.* O! But it has an Air of Gentility to be able to tell what our Governours are doing.

2. *Peas.* Why, as to Gentility, I don't aim at it; and I am sure 'twould fare better with many who do, if they were of any mind: For their way of Life is so genteel, that thereby they reduce themselves to Want and Beggary.

1. *Peas.* How so, pray?

2. *Peas.* I'll tell you, Sir. They are perpetually running about after News: The Consequence of this is, that their Customers run away from them. And so in a little time, truly, they are oblig'd to run away themselves, or else they would be clapp'd up in a Prison, there to be pinch'd with Hunger, and die in Rags.

1. *Peas.* Why so smart, Friend?

2. *Peas.*

2. *Peaf.* Nay, I meant no Harm, I assure you : I have only spoken my sense of Things, I hope, in a civil way.

1. *Peaf.* But have you heard nothing about the Debates of the Lords to-day ?

2. *Peaf.* There is a Report of some Disturbance ; but I hope 'twill come to nothing : However, the less these things are the Subjects of our Discourse, the better : For we can't rectifie what is amiss, but by spreading Discontent and Uncassiness amongst our Neighbours we may increase Disorders.

1. *Peaf.* You need be under no Apprehensions in this case : For this Difference is likely to turn to very good account.

2. *Peaf.* How so ?

1. *Peaf.* Why 'tis likely to pave the way for what many of us have long desir'd, the Downfall of *Belteshazzar*.

But here comes one that will be able to give us a more particular Account of this Matter.



Peaf. 1. *Peaf.* 2. *Peaf.* 3.

1. *Peaf.* **H**OW fares it, Friend ? How go Squares at Court ?

3. *Peaf.* I suppose you have heard the 1st President loses ground.

1. *Peaf.* Yes, I was told that he met with a great deal of Opposition.

3. *Peaf.*

3. *Peaf.* Ay, and you may depend upon it, there are some who w'on't rest 'till they have tripp'd up his Heels.

2. *Peaf.* I should be very sorry for that, I assure you.

3. *Peaf.* Why so, pray ?

2. *Peaf.* Because 'tis my opinion, that if he should be displac'd, our Affairs would not fall into so good hands.

1. *Peaf.* What can you admire in his Management ?

2. *Peaf.* I can't tell what you can dislike : We have no Wars, no Sedition, no unnecessary Taxes to support the Grandeur of the Court ; nothing, in short, to hinder our making a comfortable Provision for our Families, while we our selves enjoy Peace and Tranquillity. So that if we are not contented now, I dare say we never shall be.

3. *Peaf.* But this *Daniel* is a Jew ; and 'tis a Disgrace to have such an one for the first Minister in the Kingdom.

2. *Peaf.* It casts no Reflexion on us, Neighbour ; for as we did not set him up, so neither is it in our power to pull him down ; and therefore we have no reason to be uneasy on that score.

1. *Peaf.* But should we not stand up for our Gods whom *Daniel* contemns, and refuses to worship ?

2. *Peaf.* 'Tis true, he worships none but the God of his own Country ; a Liberty which surely we should think reasonable, if we were constrain'd to sojourn amongst those of a different Religion : But he does not attempt to hinder us from worshipping our Gods ; and they seem to have been very well satisfied : For every thing has prosper'd he has taken in hand.

1. *Peaf.* What think you of the 2d President, who, when he is displac'd, will be most likely to succeed him ?

2. *Peaf.* I think that he might be a considerable Man, if he
kept

24 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

kept his Ambition within Bounds : But a Man of his Temper will never consult our Happiness, any further than 'tis consistent with the Gratification of his own Vanity.

3. *Peaf.* Well, I hope you'll soon see your Mistake.

2. *Peaf.* If he must be advanc'd I wish I may ; but I would rather desire all things may continue as they are : For the Removal of *Belteshazzar* would certainly throw us into Confusion ; and I am of *Solomon's* mind, that Prince of these Jews who was renown'd for Wisdom in all the Eastern Countries, That a Dinner of green Herbs with Quietness, is better than a stalled Ox with Contention.

1. *Peaf. to the 3d.* Come, let us leave this obstinate Man, and take a turn towards the Court ; perhaps we shall hear some more Particulars.

3. *Peaf.* With all my heart.

2. *Peaf.* And I'll pursue the Business of my Calling.



2d Peasant alone.

NOW, if the Truth was known, these fine Fellows, who make an Appearance so much better than mine, would not be found worth so many Pence as I am Pounds. And how should it be otherwise ? For their Brains are so full of Chimeras, that they have no leisure to mind their Employments. For my own part, I hope I shall always be careful to shun the Example of such Men, and continue to move
in

in my own Sphere. Yet I would take notice of what occurs, as I have Opportunity. For that is an Argument of Prudence, and not of vain Curiosity; and in the end it may turn to a good account. And it gives me some Uneasiness to hear these Rumours concerning *Beltesbazzar*: For he is certainly a very wise Man, and a Man of great Integrity. But I must leave these things to the Powers that rule the World; and remember that 'tis foolish to repine at what I can't prevent.



Scene 2d President's House.

Pres. 2. Pres. 3. Prince Belcfis. Prince 2d.

Pres. 2. **I** Hope, my Lords, the Step we lately took
Will further our Designs.

Pr. Bel. Indeed, my Lord,
You plaid your part with so much Bravery,
You struck me with the highest Admiration.

Prince 2d. It gave us all new Life, that wish'd to see
The Downfall of our common Foe, who veils
Our Lustre, while he blazes like a Comet,
And with Destruction threatens all the Realm.

Pr. Bel. You might observe the Smiles of Approbation
Were thro' the great Assembly spread, and late

On almost every Face. None but the few
Who are Dependants on our Rival frown'd.

Pres. 3. The King seem'd much displeas'd with what was said.

Pres. 2. We could expect no less while we oppos'd
The only Man he values : But, perhaps,
His Eyes may soon be open'd ; we may find
Some way to rectify his grand Mistake,
Who thinks that nothing could seduce the Prince
From his Allegiance, or prevail with him
To cast Contempt on his indulgent Master.

Pres. 3. Alas ! 'tis all in vain to hope for this.
If Conscience won't restrain him, Cunning will,
Ne'er to encourage ought that wears the Face
Of foul Rebellion.

Pr. Bel. Don't, my Lord, indulge
These groundless Fears, which will obstruct the Work
We've undertook : But since we have engag'd
So many worthy Friends t'affist herein,
Who promise with their Fortunes, and their Lives,
If Need require, to own the glorious Cause ;
Let us proceed, consult the likely Way
To gain our hop'd-for End.

Pres. 2. Now, my good Lords,
Since we are all concern'd in the Affair,
Let each, with utmost Freedom, speak his Thoughts.

Pr. Bel. It was suggested by that noble Lord, [*pointing
to the 3d Pres.*]

That nothing ever will seduce the Prince
To join in ought that's false, and traitterous.
My Judgment is the same : Should we propose
A Scheme that looks this way, he'd soon reveal

The

The Whole to King *Darius*, and rejoyce
To make us all his Prey.

Prince 2. In this, my Lord,
We certainly agree.

Pr. Bel. And of the Jews,
His Countrymen; I doubt we know not any
Whom we may trust to make the Experiment :
For such alone have free Admission to him,
Whose Innocence, and Honour he has prov'd.

Prince 2. What think you of procuring proper Men
To lay him fast asleep in Death's cold Arms ?
Thence he will never rise to vex us more.

Pr. Bel. In truth, my Lord, I like the Motion well.

Pres. 3. O ! No, far be it from our thoughts, my Lords
The Guilt of Murder is a dreadful Load,
The Weight of which would daily press us down !
They only who are harden'd in their Vice,
Commit this Crime, and after live in Peace ;
Our Honours, and Preferments all would seem
As nothing, while our guilty Consciences
Upbraided us with Murder. We should think
We saw the Prince's Ghost pursuing us
With grim and hideous Looks, threat'ning Revenge.

Pres. 2. I see he's greatly mov'd, and won't comply.
[*aside.*

My Lord, you've spoken well. I must allow [*to him.*
We should not shed his Blood without a Cause,
A Cause that will acquit us to the World,
As well as Conscience. But methinks the Means
Of this are not remote, but in our power.

Pres. 3. If he should e'er deserve untimely Death;
For Violation of our Sov'reign's Laws,
Which he, on all Occasions, should defend;
Then we, with Ease and Pleasure might obtain
Our Wish, and all the Blame would be his own:
But he'll be ever loyal to the King.

Pres. 2. 'Tis true, the present Laws he well observes,
And whatsoever his Sov'reign shall enjoin
Merely political, he will regard:
But I've a Thought, which (if approv'd by you)
In all respects may answer our Design:
What if we should propose some new Decree;
Which would involve him in the Guilt of Treason,
Or cause him to rebel against his God?

Pr. Bel. My Lord, 'tis certainly the only way
What shall the Statute be?

Pres. 2. I would propose
Some Law like this be sign'd by King *Darius*,
That no one shall presume to supplicate
Or any God, or Man besides himself;
For thirty Days. Hereby we shall profess
Our Value for the King, shall sooth his Pride;
And lay the fatal Snare for *Belteshazzar*,
Who'll break this Law, as soon as e'er 'tis made;

Printe 2. Thanks to my noble Lord, whose greater Genius
Has found the happy Means of our Redress.

Pr. Bel. The Means that all who hear must strait applaud.

Pres. 3. It is decreed, if he is so unwise,
His Jewish Superstition to prefer
To all the Ties of Love with which he's bound

To King *Darius*, let him fall to this
A Sacrifice, and rid us of our Fears,
And all the Hardships which we now endure.

Pres. 2. My Lords, you know the Time, and Place that's
fix'd

To meet the Princes, who will join with us
In moving this before *Cyaxeres*.

Pr. Bel. I will attend your Lordship.

Prince 2. So will I.

Pres. 2. to the 3d *Pres.* My Lord, you'll meet us at the
time.

Pres. 3. I Will.

Methinks there's something whispers in my Ear, [as he is
And tells me that I have comply'd too far. going.

My aking Heart forebodes some sad Event!

But 'tis too late to alter my Resolve;

I've giv'n my word, and cannot now go back.



Pres. 2. *Beltesbazzar.*

Pres. 2. 'TIS *Beltesbazzar*, or my Eyes deceive me. [aside

My Lord, this Visit's wholly unexpected. [to him

Belt. My Lord, I came to have some free Discourse
About what happen'd in the Council-House.
We have gone on harmoniously till now.

56 BELTESHAZZAR; OR,

The reason of this sudden Alteration
I cannot apprehend.

Pres. 2. My Lord, you know
That in Debates we all have liberty
To speak our Thoughts.

Belt. Not only so, my Lord,
But in Affairs of lesser Consequence,
I'd rather at the first comply, than seem
To oppose the Man I value, love, and honour.

Pres. 2. This Flattery, *Belteshazzar*, moves me more
[*aside.*]

Than all thy Frowns, and Menaces could do:
But I must hide the Temper of my Heart.
My noble Lord you condescend too low, [To him.]
To one whose Station is some way beneath
That Eminence on which the King has fix'd you.
Herein he's shewn his wise discerning Mind
For my poor Talents and Abilities
Would think to nothing were they plac'd by yours.

Belt. Nay, nay, my Lord, this is not like a Friend.
Sincerity can ne'er be priz'd too much;
This, you well know, I always have preferr'd
To Compliments, and highest Strains of Praise:
Ambitious Men alone are fond of these.
Let it suffice for us, that we abound
In Actions that deserve Esteem and Love.

Pres. 2. Vain-glorious Man! Thou would'st disclaim
thy Share [aside.]

Of that in which 'tis plain thy Heart abounds.

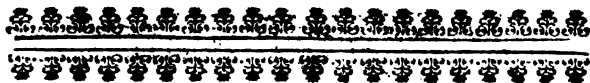
I meant not to offend your Lordship's Ear [To him.]
With

With the Profession of my high Esteem :
But that I may approve my self sincere,
Whate'er your Lordship shall propose I'll do.

Belt. I only beg we, for the time to come,
May act in concert, and exert our selves
For our King's Honour, and our Country's Good :
Concord, you know, is that alone which makes
Our Business pleasant, sweetens all our Care,
Dispatches those Affairs which call for Speed,
Preserves our Credit with the common People,
Adds to our Counsels Weight, gives Force to Laws,
Procures Respect on the most solid Grounds.

Pres. 2d. Assure your self, my Lord, this is my View ;
I hope I sha'nt be wanting on my part.
Besides, what little Interest I have
Amongst the Princes I'll improve with them,
That nought henceforth may interrupt our Peace.

Belte. My Lord, farewell 'till next we meet again.



Pres. 2d alone.

'TILL next we meet again, I think he said,
May it be so, and I desire no more !

For if these private Counsels shall succeed,
We cannot meet again on this side Death.
But were the Danger vastly to encrease,

32 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

I'd boldly face it all, and still pursue
 The Scheme I've form'd to humble this proud Man :
 No Curb, no Strength of Arm shall hold me in ;
 But like the ungovern'd Steed, I'll throw my Rider,
 Or else rush down some fatal Precipice,
 Whence falling we may perish both together.

This Sun shall set in Darkness, which outshines
 All plac'd around him, makes our best Designs
 Abortive, to procure our Sovereign's Love :
 Into his vacant Place I'll soon remove ;
 Or lay down Life with all this Load of Woe,
 Take up my Dwelling in those Shades below,
 Where, my poor twinkling Light extinct, no more
 I shall with Sighs my abject Fate deplore.



Scene



Scene Palace.

Darius. Mandane.

Dar. MY fair *Mandane*, were it not for thee;
I should account my self in Banishment,
Not a victorious Monarch, while I dwell
So distant from my Country; and the *Medes*,
My antient Subjects, settling the Affairs
In *Babylon*, my newly-conquer'd Realm.

Mand. My dear *Darius*, I can scarce believe
My self at home, this Place is so unlike
Our former Palace. But I'm satisfy'd;
All Places where I thus can gaze upon
My smiling, happy Monarch; yield Delight;
Who owns me for the Partner of his Life.

Dar. I hope, my Love, all things will soon be fix'd;
On such a Basis, that we may return,
And leave the Management of these Affairs
To able Hands. I like this *Beltshazzar*;
He is, it seems, a Man whose Worth was try'd,
By those that fill'd the Babylonish Throne,

Before.

Before we came to sway the Scepter here.

Our Choice of him was happy. May the rest

With equal Prudence, and Integrity,

Conduct themselves in their important Posts!

But the late warm Disputes molest my Mind:

Whether they did proceed from different Views

Of what might tend to our Tranquillity,

Or were design'd to shew Contempt of me,

Because the Marks of my peculiar Love:

Are thus bestow'd, I can't at present judge.

Mand. Be not disturb'd at that, my Lord: You know,

Disputes in all Affairs will often rise,

Where no Ill-will and Malice can find place.

We differ in the Judgment which we pass

On Causes, and Effects, and sometimes lose

The Guard which should exclude unruly Passion:

In a few Minutes we grow cool again,

And straight forget what 'twas that made us warm.

Dar. Perhaps 'tis so, and I may be too nice,

And jealous of my Honour;

Mand. If, my Lord,

Anxious, perplexing Thoughts invade your Breast,

Give them no room; but drive them far away.

O! Think how long a Train of great Events,

Have made your Reign successful, rais'd your Name,

Made you the Love, or Dread of half the World!

This new Addition to your vast Dominions

Will spread your Fame in future Chronicles;

Historians will record your mighty Deeds.

Dar.

Dar. My lovely Queen, thou art not form'd to sink
Thy Confort into an unmanly Softness,
Like some of thy weak Sex, whose Charms have chang'd
The Hero to the Lover. But thy Words,
Thy noble Sentiments revive my Courage,
Confirm my Resolution, still to tread
Paths that may lead me to immortal Glory.

Mand. This Stile becomes the mighty King *Darius*.

Dar. Now glows my Bosom with the Love of Fame;
It shan't be said that I so far advanc'd,
Have left my Race unfinish'd : No, my Queen,
For thy sake, for my own I'll prize my Honour,
Even as the Miser does his Bags of Gold ;
While with unweary'd Industry he seeks
T'encrease his Store. Thou shalt behold thy Lord
Rever'd by these his Subjects, proud to own
They hold their All from him, live on his Smiles.

[*Enter Serv.*]

Serv. The Presidents and Princes beg Admittance to your
Majesty.

Dar. Tell them, I am prepar'd to give them Audience.

Mand. Farewel, My Lord, may all that shall occur
Conspire to make you great, to make you happy !



Darius.



Darius. *Pref. 2. Pref. 3. Prince Belesis. Prince 2.
and others of the Princes.*

Pref. 2. **O** King *Darius*, may'st thou ever live,
And be admir'd by all that hear thy Name!

Happy are we under thy gentle Rule;
Happier by far than when *Belsbazzar* fate
Upon the Throne; a Prince unfit to reign;
He lov'd, alas! a soft, inglorious Ease,
Feasting, and Riot his supream Delight.
But thou art worthy of the Crown thou'st won;
Thy Glory's like the Sun's, when from the East
He swiftly mounts towards his Meridian Height;
But like his short-liv'd Splendour wo'nt decay.
Therefore to serve thee is our constant Care,
Honour'd in being made the Instruments
To blazon to the World thy great Deserts.

Dar. I thank you for these warm, doubtless sincere,
Expressions of your Loyalty, and Love.
To see my Subjects happy is my Aim,
As well as to extend my Government:
I thirst for Glory, like the panting Stag
For cooling Streams; but 'tis in such a way,
That none shall have occasion to repine
At my Success, or wish my Splendour less.

Pref. 3.

Pres. 3. Trust me, my Sovereign, I could weep for joy,
To see so great a Prince upon the Throne.

Pr. Bel. We all congratulate your Majesty
On the Success with which your Arms are crown'd,
And Counsels for your Subjects Happiness.

Dar. But where is *Belshazzar* ?

Pres. 2. He, my Liege,
Design'd t'have paid his Homage to his King
With us, but was by accident prevented.
His Duty we have brought, with large Professions
Of Readiness to make your Will his Law.
He little thinks how sure the Scheme is laid, [*Aside.*
To bring him down to nothing.

Prince 2. Most mighty Prince, no Language can express
Thy Dignity and Worth ; thou canst effect
Whate'er thy peerless Wisdom shall design :
Thy Glory spreads apace, and will, e'erlong,
Surround the spacious Globe. The wond'ring Earth,
Struck with thy Brightness, shall disown her Stocks,
Her brutal Deities, and worship thee.
Thou shalt be call'd *Father of Gods and Men.*

Pres. 2. Such Honour should, my Liege, be paid you now
In these your Realms, by those whom with your Breath
You can at once destroy, or raise to Bliss.
Wherefore we humbly beg, in *Daniel's* Name,
Great King, and all the Princes of the Land,
As tho' they were assembled in your Palace,
To shew our high Esteem, and Loyalty ;
You'd sign this Statute (let it be confirm'd
According to the Laws by which you rule

O'er *Medes* and *Persians*) that no Man presume,
 For Thirty Days, on pain of instant Death,
 To sue for any Favour at the Hands
 Of Gods, or Men, besides your Royal Self.

Dar. My Lords, you are the Natives of the Place,
 And the best Judges of our Subjects Temper :
 And as we'd do whatever might inance
 Our Glory, so we won't impose on them
 What they would count a Burden, or might bear
 Resemblance of Tyrannic Government.

Pr. Bel. There is no ground of Fear, most mighty Prince:
 As we can be suspected of no End,
 But to give Proofs of our most firm Allegiance ;
 So, were we not assur'd 'twould much redound
 To your Advantage, we should ne'er presume
 To make the Motion to your Majesty.

Pres. 2. We all shall think it no unpleasing Task,
 To keep this Law ; and lo ! the Nations round,
 Who hear how chearfully we have obey'd,
 Will highly honour, and applaud the King,
 Who thus appears t'have won the Hearts of those,
 He lately has subdu'd by Force of Arms.

Dar. If this be done, my Lords, one thing is needful,
 That the Preamble signify to all,
 What are our Views in making this Decree ;
 That 'tis occasion'd by no Doubt we have
 Of our dear Subjects ; but, at your Request,
 We sign'd it, that by their Observance of it,
 The World might see our fix'd and happy State,
 While King, and Lords, and Commonalty, all

Are

Are in the firmest Bonds of Love united.

Pres. 2. We have prepar'd it for your Majesty,
And the Preamble instantly I'll write. [*Pres. 2. writing.*

Dar. O! my good Lords, let nothing now dissolve
[*to the rest.*

This happy Union ; but when I am gone,
As soon I to my Country must return,
Let each one in his proper Station seek
The Nation's Welfare : Let no Jealousies,
No Jars and Discords e'er disturb your Counsels,
Eclipse your Lustre, lessen, or interrupt
My Subjects Happiness.

Pres. 3. Your Majesty,
I hope, most safely may rely upon us.

Pres. 2. [*reading*] Be it known unto all the Subjects of
this Realm, that We *Darius*, King of the *Medes* and *Per-*
sians, and now also acknowledg'd King of *Babylon*, do, at
the Request of the Presidents and Princes of this Nation,
make the following Decree ; not because we question the Fi-
delity of our good Subjects, but that the World may see
there is the most firm, and happy Union between King and
People.

That no Man shall, for the Space of thirty Days, offer a Pe-
tition to any God, or Man besides our self.

Be it thus enacted, according to the Laws of the *Medes*
and *Persians*, that alter not.

And if any one shall dare to condemn this Decree, he shall
immediately be cast into the Lions Den.

[*King signs it.*

Dar. Have you ought else to say before you go ?

D 2

Pres. 2.

Pres. 2. We have no more, my Liege; but this Decree
 Being ratified, we shall take proper care
 To have it publish'd. And may ev'ry Day
 Afford new Proofs of Rev'ence, and of Duty
 In all o'er whom the great *Darius* reigns !



Darius alone.

THese Men have spoke me fair, and while I heard [*after*
mus'ing.
 I thought they spoke with Judgment, and with Love.—
 But now I'm left more coolly to reflect——
 I know not what to think.——'Twas something strange,
 That *Daniel* came not with them : For tho' he
 Might count it needless to attend them now,
 Merely for Ceremony, since he has
 Constant Admittance at my leisure Hours ;
 Yet when they came on such a special Errand,
 Surely, if he had been appriz'd thereof,
 I should have seen him here.——Methinks, I wish
 This new Decree unsign'd : Perhaps 'twas fram'd
 To carry on th' unhappy Opposition,
 Begun amongst them in the Council-House.

The Monarch on his glittering Throne, in vain,
 Would hope for Pleasure unallay'd with Pain :

For

For anxious Cares spoil all his sweet Delight,
Fears change his Sun-shine for the Gloom of Night ;
And while he's aiming higher still to rise,
He knows not but he may with Dread surprise,
Fall like a Meteor from the starry Skies.

Scene Belteshazzar's House.

Belteshazzar. Aristone.

Belt. O ! My fair Partner, I return to thee,
From the important Business of my Station,
With the same ardent Wishes which I felt,
When the blest Morning dawn'd, that made thee mine.

Arist. Indeed, my Lord, I have an equal Flame,
That always glows within my ravish'd Breast ;
Nor can it e'er decay ; as soon the Sun
Might lose his genial Fire.

Belt. I've oft rejoyc'd
To see the Spring advance, Nature revive,
Bury'd in Winter's solitary Grave,
The vegetable World all dress'd anew
In Shades of Green, most lovely to the Sight :
The winged Choiristers melodious sung,
Delighting, and, delighted with the Prospect.
But thou'rt an everlasting Spring to me ;
For thou hast Charms old Time can ne'er diminish ;
Nor could the beauteous Face of Nature please,

If thou wert absent from my longing Eyes.

Arist. How stand Affairs, my Lord? Alas, I fear
Left you, sincere, and free from all Design;
Should fall a Prey to those who can deceive,
Cover with Shews of Love their deadly Hate.

Belt. I hope, my Fair, the Storm is blown away,
Which seem'd to threaten us. The Presidents,
And Princes carry't towards me fair and friendly;
Our Difference might be only accidental;
And what *Seraïab* told me of their Hate,
Profess'd more openly than heretofore,
Might have for its Foundation nothing new.
However, they shall find, I'll always act
On Principles of Honour, and of Love:
Prudence, indeed, requires me to mistrust.
Much more than suits my open, honest Nature,
To guard my self and thee from their Attempts.
But as for Kindness, and Benevolence,
I'll exercise it towards my deadliest Foes:
Could I now serve the Men that wish my Ruin,
I'd do it with Delight; There's something great
In rend'ring Good for Evil; There's true Joy
In the Review; whereas, Revenge indulg'd
Disturbs the Mind, and breaks our Peace and Rest.

Arist. 'Tis great, indeed; 'tis God-like to forgive:
Thus you have taught me. My Religion now
Encourages my Hope, that since I swerve,
In many things, from my great Ruler's Laws,
He'll pardon my Transgressions: So should I
Forgive my Neighbour's Trespas, in return

The Heroic J E W.

43

For such stupendious Grace, such boundless Love.

Belt. Excellent Scholar ! Thou hast learn'd indeed :
For what thou'lt learn'd thou do'lt reduce to Practice ;
And Practice 'tis alone that makes us wise,
That makes us useful, makes us happy too :
What tho' we talk'd like Angels clad with Light ;
If these our Hearts were sway'd by sordid Lusts,
Reason still banish'd from her native Throne ?
But we, my *Aristone*, shall keep pace
In travelling to yonder blissful World ;
The Rules of our Religion shall appear
Transcribed in our Lives.

Arist. And when remov'd
By Death, we shall ascend on Angels Wings,
(So I have heard you say) for ever dwell
In Paradise, where grows the Tree of Life,
Where Rivers of immortal Pleasures flow.

[*Enter Servant.*

Serv. My Lord, *Seraiah* craves Admittance to you,
On Businejs of Importance.



Beltesbazzar. Seraiah.

Ser. O ! my Lord,
Could I avoid it, sure I would not be
To you the Messenger of heavy Tidings:

But

44 • BELTESHAZZAR; or,

But I'm compell'd to tell you what I've heard ;
Such News as shakes my Frame ! I'm quite born down
With Grief for you, my self, my valu'd Friends,
The pious Jews, who sure will rue this Day !

Belt. What, my *Seraiah*, can it be that fills
Thy Soul with Anguish, and extorts thy Tears ?
Thou art not us'd to weep.

Ser. Alas, my Lord,
A strange Decree is sign'd ! The Presidents
And Princes have prevail'd with King *Darius*,
Most strictly to forbid, on pain of Death,
Our supplicating any God, or Man,
Besides himself, for thirty Days to come :
So long he'll be the Idol of the Land :
Whoe'er offends, shut in the Lions Den,
Must be devoured by the rav'nous Beasts.
Nor has the King reserv'd himself a Power,
This monstrous and unheard-of Law to change.

Belt. Go, tell my Friends, they need not be alarm'd ;
For tho' the Law seems to be made for All ;
None will disturb them, they will have no Spies
To mark their Conduct, and be their Accusers :
'Tis only aim'd at Me, by those my Foes
Of whom you lately spake. I thought, indeed,
The Storm had now been past : But lo ! it hangs
Directly o'er my Head ; and instantly
In its full force it must be poured down,
And sink me to the Dust !—Thou, gracious Lord, [*Kneeling*
Whose tender Mercies are without a Bound,
Since 'tis in vain to hope for an Escape,

Prepare me for the great and solemn Day,
When with my Blood I shall defend thy Cause,
Acknowledge Thee to be the God of gods :
Permit not my religious Confidence
To leave me now, in these unlook'd-for Perils :
Let not th^e Courage which I've often shew'd,
At last be lost, give place to Cowardise :
O ! Let me not hereby dishonour Thee,
Disgrace my self, distress my Friends, and make
My Enemies the more to triumph o'er me :
But let me still retain my Constancy,
Triumphing meet those fierce, rapacious Beasts,
Who soon will end my Pains, release my Soul,
To reap the glorious Fruits at thy Right-Hand !

Ser. O ! My good Lord, your Conduct is so noble,
So truly great, I now could weep for Joy !

Belt. Why, my dear Friend, I have no cause to mourn.
Their's is the sad, th' unhappy Case, on whom
The Guilt must lie, a heavy Weight indeed !
Of shedding innocent Blood, the Blood of one
Who ne'er offended 'em in Thought ; but wish'd
Peace, and Prosperity to them and theirs.

Ser. My dear, most valu'd Lord, I'd not suggest
Ought that should shock your Virtue ; or excite
Those Images which have been most delightful,
But now must cause an answerable Pain,
To serve no worthy Purpose. But, my Lord,
Tho' you're thus easily reconcil'd to Death,
With which you daily have convers'd with Pleasure ;
For many Reasons, if you could preserve

Your

46 BELTESHAZZAR, or,

Your Life and Honour too, you now should chuse it :
 What would the Princess suffer, to be torn
 From your Embraces thus ! The sad Idea
 Fix'd deep within her Breast, there would remain,
 And make the Remnant of her Days unhappy :
 We too should lose our only powerful Friend ;
 By whom, alas ! shall *Jacob* then arise ?

Belt. There are, my Friend, no honest Means of Safety ;
 Therefore I must not, dare not think of Life.
 As for my dearest Partner, true she clings
 About my Heart-strings, firmly fixed here :
 So twines the spreading Ivy round the Oak.
 But I've resolv'd, *Seraiah*, not to hear
 The Pleadings of my Love, when Duty stands
 In Competition with it. 'Tis agreed
 Between us, that we ever will be Proof
 Against th' Assaults of Vice, and now's the Time
 For my Probation. And my Friends, the Jews
 May still conclude the God, whose Truth's engag'd,
 Won't want the proper Instruments to work,
 To bring about the great, long wish'd Event,
 Which in his Counsels he has firmly fix'd.

Ser. But what, my Lord, if for so short a time
 You should in private offer your Address,
 And keep your Window shut ? The Jews will know
 The Cause of this, and none will take offense.

Belt. No, my *Seraiah*, it shall ne'er be said,
 I, in Appearance, from my Duty swerv'd,
 The Duty which I owe the living God.
 Besides, suppose I should comply so far,

They

They might with Ease procure a new Decree,
That none should hold a Place of Trust, but those
Who will declare, they utterly abhor
What these Men call the Jewish Superstition.
Then comfortless, and useless, I may wish,
In vain, that I had died at first with Honour.

Ser. I am persuaded that could never be:
The King, my Lord, has surely been misled,
Thro' Ignorance, and Rashness; nor conceiv'd
The Damage you are likely to sustain.

Belt. I thought, indeed, I had been better fix'd
In his Affections; but it cannot be.—
A Law of such Importance to be sign'd,
Without my Knowledge.——No, I was deceiv'd;
Or if he ever lov'd me, I'm cashier'd,
Thro' the Insinuations of my Foes.
And now adieu, my King, the Court, and all
My worthy, valu'd Friends, my dearest Wife:
I'm going a long Journey, to return
No more, to dwell on Earth, with mortal Men.

Ser. O! My dear Lord, I'll offer up to Heav'n
Incessant, fervent Prayers on your Behalf.

Belt. Perhaps we once may meet again in Life, [*Embracing him.*]

Once more embrace, and take our last Farewell.



Beltesbazz-



Belteshazzar. Aristone.

Belt. **I** Must not hide it from her ; but alas ! [*aside.*
How shall I tell the News ? Poor *Aristone* !

Arist. My Lord, I listen'd not to your Discourse ;
But fancy'd, at some distance, that I heard
Some vehement Words, Signs of uncommon Grief.

Belt. Fear not, my Love, no Harm can e'er befall
Or thee, or me, so long as we preserve
Our Innocence unstain'd.

Arist. Nay, pray, my Lord,
If the sad Subject of your late Discourse
Belongs to us, keep not the Secret from me,
But let me know it all. You oft have said,
That I should share your Griefs as well as Joys.

Belt. I lately told thee how uncertain are
The Enjoyments of the World, and Life it self,
T' excite thee to prepare for all Events.
Suppose the Time of Trial should be near ?

Arist. Heav'n guard your precious Life, my dearest Lord !
For tho' I'd try to bear the pressing Load,
I know not how I could survive your Fall.

Belt. The same almighty Power, my lovely Fair,
Which has sustain'd us, can encrease our Strength,
According to the Weight that's cast upon us.

Arist.

Arist. O ! Keep me now no longer in Suspence !
I fain would know, what yet I dread to hear !

Belt. But thou must think, my dearest *Aristone*,
Whether thy Will is to thy Maker's bow'd ;
Whether thou could'st resign thy worldly All,
Should he demand it of thee. These, thou know'st,
Are the Conditions of thy gaining Bliss
In yon fair Realms of everlasting Light.

Arist. Well do'st thou mind me of my sacred Vow ;
I've sworn t' approve of all my Maker does ;
And won't go back. Almighty Grace assist,
That I may still regard the solemn Oath !

Belt. Then know, my fair one, a Decree is sign'd,
Obtain'd, no doubt, by our inveterate Foes,
That none but King *Darius* be ador'd
For thirty Days, on pain of instant Death.

Arist. How could he be prevail'd with thus to act ?

Belt. Flattery, the Bane of Kings, had fann'd the Flame
Of wild Ambition, fierce it rag'd within him ;
Blinded with this, he drank the pleasant Draught,
Suspected not the Poison in the Bowl.

Arist. This was, my Lord, beyond Example wild,
So impious, that it shocks my Soul to hear it ;
Bare Inclination to regard his Will
Herein, would make us worthy endless Pains :
Then let us disobey and die together.

Belt. No, *Aristone*, 'tis a Snare for me,
For me alone, and thou must stay behind.

Arist. Why then, my Lord, should you expose your self?
For is not our Religion now the same ?

E

Belt.

50 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

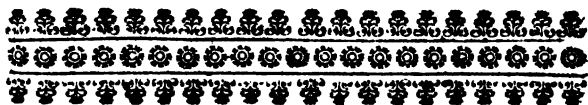
Belt. I have been long accustomed to pray,
With open Window towards the sacred Place,
Where once our glorious Temple brightly shone,
And where *Jehovah* in a Cloud abode.
They who contriv'd this Law well knew my Manner :
And judging rightly, that I'd not desist,
As tho' I was afraid to own my God ;
They aim'd hereby to fix the heavy Charge
Of Treason on my Conduct towards my King.

Arist. Alas ! I quake, my Resolution melts !

Belt. O ! Think, my Love, how great will be my Gain;
Altho' I must resign my All below !
Thy *Belteshazzar* now shall be advanc'd
Higher than any Prince, that rules on Earth.
My Soul set free, shall instantly ascend,
Angels, my friendly Guides, on me attend ;
Open Heav'ns stately Portals, shew my Seat,
Where I'm to dwell in Happiness complete,
And my fair Partner soon with Ecstasy shall meet.



Scene



Scene the Palace.

Darius. Mandane.

Mand. **G**OOD Morning to my best-lov'd Lord, *Darius*,
Who, like the glorious Parent of the Day,
His cheering Influence will dispense to all
That seek his Light !

Dar. Your Language now, my Queen,
Sounds harsh to me, and grates upon my Ear.

Mand. My Lord, you're discompos'd.

Dar. I am, indeed :

My Mind is sore distress'd ; I've lost my Taste
Of empty Praise, e'er since I set my Hand
To this Decree, the Presidents procur'd :
My Sleep last Night was broken, and disturb'd ;
And tho' I've no distinct Perception left
Of the sad Images which crowded in,
And fill'd my Fancy with their frightful Forms ;
I well remember that I then beheld
Dangers and Difficulties all around,
And I with pains was struggling to get thro' :
And all I in Imagination felt,
Is real now I wake.

52 BELTESMAZZAR; or,

Mand. Indeed, my Lord,

You give me pain; O! Let me not behold
These Tokens of a Mind disquieted,
And quite unarm'd for Love, and Peace, and Joy!

Dar. I've been mistaken greatly, my *Mandane*;
In quest of empty Bubbles wander'd far,
Neglected Reason's Light, which shines in Man,
Exalts him above all the brutal Kind.
I have been bred in fulsome Flattery;
And Love of Honour being my darling Passion,
I thought it all proceeded from Esteem,
Believ'd I was indeed what others told me;
Thus swell'd with Pride consented to receive
The Worship of my Subjects, and forbade
The like to Gods, and Men for thirty Days.
How could I be so blind, precipitant!
But what, alas, is Man, when Passion cherishes,
Excludes all serious, and deliberate Thought!

Mand. You're too severe upon your self, my Lord,
For the Decree obliges not to this;
It is enough no open Forms be us'd,
For this small Space of Time within the Land;
All Men in private may address their Gods,
And no one can accuse.

Dar. That Thought, my Queen,
In my Distress, affords me some Relief;
One part of my Concern is quite remov'd;
Our Fav'rite will be safe in spite of Envy,
That has, 'tis plain, occasion'd this Decree,
Of which, I've been inform'd, he knew not ought.

But

The Heroic J E W.

53

But for my self I needs must be in pain ;
For sure this ugly Statute wears the Face
Of vast Impiety ! What Right have I
To Adoration ? I'm a mortal Man,
Subject to fierce Diseases ere I die ;
Nor can I shield my self by Power, or Art,
When I do Wrong, from sad tormenting Thoughts,
That haunt my Mind, like Furies, make me hate
The cheerful Day, and quite destroy my Bliss.

Mand. Whate'er my Lord may think is now amiss,
'Tis not too late to alter.

Dar. O ! It is,
Unless I'll hazard all my Fame and Empire ;
This Statute is declar'd unchangeable.

Mand. O ! Rather hazard these, than live in Woe,
Torn and distracted by such dreadful Thoughts.

Dar. I know not what to do, nor where to flee
For Succour ! ——— Solid Darkness now is spread
Around me, and I can descry no Path !——
Some Power, or Powers above there surely are,
From whom at first all Things deriv'd their Being ;
The Heavens, the Earth, the Sun, the Moon, the Stars ;
Some Powers that clothe the Ground with Corn and Grass,
The Trees with Leaves, and Fruit, that satisfy
The Appetite of all who are in want.
Whoe'er they be,——— O ! Might I know them now,
And knowing, prostrate at their Feet, adore !

[*Enter Servant.*

Serv. Will it please your Majesty to admit the
Prince *Belteshazzar* ?

E. 3.

Dar.

Dar. Tell him I am at leisure.

[to the Servants.

I am oblig'd to see him, my *Mandane*,

[to the Queen.

And yet I'm quite aham'd : But if his Love

Could over-look this unadvised Step,

His Counsel might direct my doubtful Mind.

Mand. O ! May the Issue of your Conference

Be Peace to you, and Safety to the Prince !



Darius. Belshezzar.

Belt. ALL Happiness attend, my royal Master !

Dar. Daniel, I us'd to see thee here with Joy ;

But now thy Presence gives me some Disquiet :

For tho' thy outward Looks appear so fair,

Calm as the Sea when free from boisterous Winds,

Yet sure thou dost upbraid me in thy Thoughts ;

For I upbraid my self with great Unkindness.

Belt. Should I, my Sovereign, say that I'm unmov'd

At what has lately happen'd, an Event

To me of such Importance, that 'twill fix

My State for Ages which shall never end ;

I should do what I never could,——dissemble.

But still my ardent Wishes shall attend

Your Person, and your Reign, 'till these few Sands

Of Time, which yet remain, are all run out.

If I ne'er entertain'd within my Breast

Malice,

The Heroic J E W.

33

Malice, and Inclination to Revenge,
When injur'd by my Equals with Design ;
Surely, my King has my sincere Regards,
Altho' he on a sudden, through Surprise,
Has cast me from that Height of Power, to which
His undeserved Goodness lately rais'd me.

Dar. Thou wond'rous Man! Or more than Man thou art,
[*aside*

Some heavenly Power, wrapp'd in a Veil of Flesh !
Alas ! What mean thy Words ? Thy Life's secure. [*to him*

Belt. My speedy Death is certain.

Dar. Thou'rt mistaken :

Keep but thy Worship private these few Days,
Then as to thee, all will be well again.

Belt. O ! No, my Sovereign, it cannot be.
This was suggested by my worthy Friend,
Who brought the News, that the Decree was sign'd :
But Conscience would not suffer this Compliance.

Dar. Should'st thou consent, what Damage would ensue ?

Belt. The Damage would, my Prince, be infinite ;
So great, thou could'st not make me an Amends,
Could'st thou bestow the Kingdoms on the Globe.
This Sign's the outward Badge of my Religion :
And to omit it, is to tell the World,
I dare not own my God, when human Laws
Enjoin me to forsake his righteous Ways ;
That I dread more the Wrath of mortal Man,
Than his Displeasure ; this is to assert
What is most impious but to think, that Man
In Worth and Dignity excels his Maker.

Dar. What can I say ? I've nothing to reply.

Belt.

56 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

Belt. Think not, my Liege, I am less loyal grown :
For from the first, I ne'er could yield to that,
Which the great Law of Nature does forbid :
When I was chosen for the Royal Palace,
In blooming Youth, I would not share the Lot,
The common Lot of those, who bore my Office.
Since that, amidst all Changes, I've preserv'd
M^r Integrity ; nor would I foil the Gemm
To gain whole Empires, or prevent my Fall,
From this high Pinnacle, whereon I stand.
I therefore own, the Law this Morn I broke :
No doubt, my Prince will quickly have my Accusation.

Dar. O ! Name it not ! The Thought confounds me quite !

Alas ! I wander in a dreadful Maze,—
That to my Sight appears to have no End !

Belt. Be not concern'd at all, my Prince, for me ;
For I am going to far happier Realms,
To higher Honours, more exalted Joys ;
I triumph in the Thought, and stand unmov'd,
Ev'n now the Snares of Death are wound about me.

Dar. O ! That I'd sooner fought thy good Advice !
But is there now no Path that leads to Rest ?

Belt. There is, my Prince ; but 'tis a thorny one,
Tho' at the End thou't reap immortal Joy.

Dar. O ! Say how I may find it, and I'll run :
I'll suffer in thy stead ; will that suffice ?

Belt. 'Twill not, my Sovereign ; but if thou't attend,
I'll mark the certain Way to Happiness.

Dar. Speak, speak, my *Belteshazzar* ; for thy King

Is all Anttention !——

Belt. Think then, *Darius*, that the Time will come,
Will quickly come, when all thy Pomp must end ;
Thy splendid Palace changed for a Grave,
A little, little Spot will hold thy Corps,
Breathless, and pale, and turning to Corruption.
Then shall the thinking Substance that's within,
That animates this Clay, ascend on high,
To dwell in perfect Bliss, or else descend
To Realms of Darkness, Horrour, and Dispair.

Dar. But how to gain that Bliss, to shun these Woes ?

Belt. The Way to this is only to be virtuous.

Dar. But what is Virtue ?

Belt. Virtue does consist

In acting as calm Reason shall direct ;
Treating the various Beings that exist
According to their Nature, as they are
The Objects which employ our Thoughts, our Will,
And all the Passions of the human Soul.

Dar. Then Virtue be henceforward my Pursuit.

Belt. Know farther, O my Sovereign, none deserve
The Name of Virtuous, but they who own
One great Supreme, first Cause, and End of all
In Heaven, or Earth, revere, and love his Name ;
Who treat with Kindness, and Humanity,
Their Fellow-Creatures, study to promote
Whate'er Delight their Nature will admit.

Dar. In such a Course, my Friend, shall I be happy ?

Belt. Thou shalt, my Prince, obtain eternal Joys,
But amongst wicked Men may'st be expos'd

To

To various Dangers, as thou see'st I am.

Dar. Thou'rt not in Danger; for thou shalt not die.

Belt. How can my Life be safe? The Law is sign'd,
Its Precept I have broke, its Penalty
Thou must inflict, or hazard thy Dominion.

Dar. If thou'rt accus'd the Rulers of the Land,
Shall all attend me in the Council-House.
I'll try if kind Entreaties will prevail,
That Mercy may take place of rigid Justice;
If they insist on this, I'll hazard all,
Rather than give thee up.

Belt. May Heav'n inspire you to pursue those Ways,
Which will promote your true Felicity!
For me it is no matter; I'm prepar'd
For all that can befall me.

Dar. Happy Man [*As Belteshaz. goes out.*]
He is! O That my Soul was form'd like his!



Darius. Pref. 2. Pref. 3.

Pref. 2. **A**LL Health and Happiness to great *Darius*!
Dar. What is your Errand?

Pref. 2. Yesterday, O King,
Thou know'st the Law was sign'd which we propos'd,—

Dar. O cursed Law! [*aside.*]

Pref. 2. 'T'advance thy Fame, and make thee more re-
nown'd.

Dar.

Dar. Most infamous! Disgrace to human Nature! [*aside.*

Pres. 2. This Law's already broke by *Beltesbazzar* ;
Tho' he pretends such wond'rous Loyalty :
This Morning he, as heretofore, invoc'd
His God, despising thee, and thy Decree.

Pres. 3. We both are Witnesses of the Contempt
Cast on our mighty Sovereign by this Man.

Dar. I own, my Lords, I rashly sign'd this Law,
Which you procur'd by Craft, and vile Deceit ;
Your Aim herein was to destroy a Man,
Whose Worth's beyond the greatest Monarch's Wealth :
And with what face can you be his Accusers ?

Pres. 2. If judging King *Darius* was misled,
In what might prove Destructive to his Reign,
Affection prompted us in such a Way,
The only Way we had, to undeceive him ;
Our good Intentions sure he will accept.

Dar. Was not the Statute fram'd to entangle *Daniel* ?

Pres. 2. Not to ensnare him, but to gain a Proof
That *Daniel* can rebel, whene'er the Law
Shall thwart his Humour ? Now, my Liege, 'tis plain.

Dar. 'Tis plain to me he never will rebel,
While my Commands are lawful. This Decree
No Man should keep : Alas ! It is profane !
Then go in Peace, and take no notice of it.

Pres. 2. The Princes, and the People will require
The Punishment of *Daniel*. If thy Crown
Be worth the keeping, O my Prince, comply !

Dar. Let all the Princes forthwith be conven'd,
And I'll attend them in the Council-House.

Pres. 2.

60 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

Pres. 2. We'll summon them, my Liege.

Pres. 3. Believe, *Darius*,
Our Hearts, our Fortunes, and our Lives are thine.



Darius alone.

I Can't but celebrate that matchless Skill,
Which over-rules the Actions of the Bad,
Makes them subservient to the noblest Ends.
'Twas vile in these false Presidents to lay
The Snare for *Beltesbazzar*, vile in me
By these most impious Means to seek for Praise:
But I would hope the great all-seeing Power,
Who sways his Scepter over all below,
Out of the deadly Poison will extract
A Medicine, that shall heal my wounded Soul.
My sad tormenting Fears are chas'd away;
The wond'rous Load that press'd me down's remov'd;
Serenity's return'd into my Breast;
Some new Delight I feel. What is the Cause?
'Tis this, the settled Purpose of my Mind
To listen to my Conscience, as the Voice
Of God most high, and with deliberate Thought,
To study what Behaviour He expects.
Great Monarch of the World, direct my Ways;
Th' Advantage shall be mine, and thine the Praise!

Pres.



Scene Pref. 2d's House.

Pref. 2. Wife, and Daughters.

Wife. **D**epend upon't, my Lord, we're all undone.

Pref. 2. Thy Fears are groundless, tho' the King's displeas'd,

He must comply ; The Princes are resolv'd
They won't release him from his Obligation.

Wife. Perhaps I am too fearful ; but my Dream,
Last Night, most strongly has impress'd my Mind ;
Sure, Time the Images can ne'er deface.

Pref. 2. What was thy Dream ?

Wife. O ! It was horrible !

The bare Remembrance gives me such a Shock,
My Blood runs cold ! 'Methought, I saw my Lord,
My self, our Children, in a lonely Desert ;
When lo ! Some savage Beasts of Prey appear'd :
We had no Weapons to defend our selves,
None nigh to help ! We shriek'd, and cry'd in vain ;
On they advanc'd with Speed, and furious Rage,
And seiz'd us all at once !—Then I awak'd.

Pref. 2. This was th' Effect of meer Anxiety,
Which you have entertain'd, since we receiv'd
Th' Account, that King *Darius* is disturb'd :
Perhaps 'tis only Rumour ; if 'tis true,

F

I think

think it cannot frustrate our Design.

Wife. I a'n't so weak t' imagin, he will doom
Us to the Lion's Den, because our Foe
Has justly merited the Punishment :
But much I fear that we shall rue th' Event,
Some way or other.

Pres. 2. What should'st fear, my Love ?

Wife. Suppose the King, displeas'd with what you've done,
Should find out some Pretence for his Disgust,
Some disrespectful Words, a little Flaw
In your past Conduct, or misrepresnt
An Action capable of different Lights ;
And in revenge should cause you to resign,
Confiscate your Estate : O ! Then, my Lord,
Disgrace and Poverty will be to us
The fiercer Destroyers ; we shall fall their Prey !

Pres. 2. We've too much Interest in the People now,
The King will be afraid to make a Change ;
Not knowing what Seditions hence may rise,
To shake that Throne, on which he plac'd himself
By Conquest, and illegal Usurpation.

Daugh. 1. Dear Sir, consider that our All depends
On your Success.

Wife. Let others run the Risque,
Go on t' oppose the King in this Affair,
And pride themselves in courting thus their Ruin.

Daugh. 2. O ! We entreat you'd make the King your Friend !

Pres. 2. 'Tis now too late.

Daugh. 1. 'Tis not, if you'll prevail
With those whom you can influence, to consent

That

That *Daniel* should escape.

Daugh. 2. You will appease

The King; the Prince will over-look our Fault.

Pres. 2. Urge me no more, your Reasonings all are vain;

Should I comply, none of us could be safe;

One so provok'd would surely be reveng'd

On those that laid the Plot; so take away

His Honours, and his Life. And for my part,

I'd rather die at once, than live in fear

Of what my hated Rival may devise.

You knew at first, some Danger would attend

This our pursuit; and yet you all approv'd it.

Wherefore be patient now, and wait th' Event;

As soon as 'tis determin'd, I'll return,

And hope my Tidings will occasion Joy.



Scene Street.

Shallum. Shemaiah.

Shall. S Hemaiah, what a dismal Change is made
In our Affairs since last we met!

Shem. 'Tis sad;

Our pleasing Hopes of Freedom are destroy'd,

Built on th' Advancement of the noble Prince,

Who falls this Day a Sacrifice to Virtue!

Shall. Thus our Experience will to us confirm

That all terrestrial Good is meer Deceit:

We look for Bliss, and Sorrow is our Lot.

64 BELTESHAZAR; or,

So wait the Husbandmen for joyful Harvest :
 The Seed is sown, springs up, and grows apace ;
 The fruitful Show'rs promise a plenteous Crop ;
 The Regent of the Skies bestows his Rays ;
 All Nature smiles and glads th' industrious Swain ;
 The Sickles are prepar'd, the Labourers stand
 Ready to reap the bending, ripen'd Corn.
 But suddenly destroying Hail descends,
 Ev'n such as fell, when Amram's potent Son
 Stretch'd out his Rod in Egypt: All their Hopes
 Vanish at once ; they live to save their Lives.

Shem. Have you yet seen the Prince?

Shall. Yes, my *Shemaiab* ;

As soon as he had heard th' unlook'd-for News,
 He sent me word he'd see me instantly.

Shem. How did he bear it? Was he not o'erwhelm'd
 With Grief, and drown'd in Floods of Tears?

Shall. Far from it. Fix'd, immovable he stood,
 Like some tall Cedar, which has taken root,
 So firmly, in the Earth, no Hurricane
 Can tear it up, and lay it on the Ground.

Shem. Heroic Man! Too great to dwell below !
 And therefore after this most signal Proof
 Of his attaining to celestial Virtue,
 He must depart, to dwell with those bright Souls,
 Who shine, like him, around *Jehovah's* Throne.

Shall. Come, let us hasten to his House, *Shemaiab*,
 Where he would take his leave of all his Friends.

Shem. May his Deportment raise my drooping Courage,
 That on this sad Occasion, I may act
 Worthy the Friend of this illustrious Man!

Scene

Scene the Street.

Peasant 1st. Peasant 2d.

Peas. 1. **A**H, my old Acquaintance, that cares to hear no News.

Peas. 2. No, Sir, I never said that I car'd to hear no News; tho' I am very ready to own, that I don't set up for a Politician.

Peas. 1. Well, you see I had very good Intelligence about *Belphezzor*.

Peas. 2. I am sorry it proves so.

Peas. 1. What are you sorry that he, who has been for some time suspected, has prov'd himself a Rebel?

Peas. 2. That he has been suspected, I know not. Some, indeed, have born him Ill-will, because they have coveted his Place. And Ill-will, you know, never speaks well: But it often thinks better than it speaks; so that the envious Man frequently gives his Conscience the lye, while he is slandering his Neighbour.

Peas. 1. But I hope you will allow, that since he has broken the Law, he deserves to die.

Peas. 2. I am pretty careful what I say; but I believe, Sir, you scorn to be an Informer; and therefore I freely own to you, that I think the Law was a malicious one; and besides that it favours of no great Veneration for the Gods.

Peas. 1. However, you will allow, that it may have this

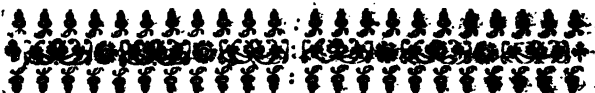
66 BELTESHAZZAR; OR,

good Effect, to prevent the Growth of the Jewish Superstition, and hinder these Captives from attempting to throw off the Yoke.

Peaf. 2. You know I have declar'd for Liberty of Conscience in Religion; whatever that Religion be: And tho' I wish well to my native Country; I can't but exercise some Compassion toward those who are Captives in a strange Land.

Peaf. 1. The People are waiting about the Council-House impatient to know the Consequence of this Affair.

Peaf. 2. I wish it may end well.



Peaf. 1. Peaf. 2. Peaf. 3.

Peaf. 3. **H**OW do you, Friends?

Peaf. 1. Do you know whether the King, and Princes have determin'd this Matter?

Peaf. 3. Yes, the Debate was presently over; For the Presidents and Princes declar'd against the King, and insisted on the Punishment of *Belteshazzar*.

Peaf. 2. How did the King brook it?

Peaf. 3. He seem'd not much disturb'd; But told them, that in an Hour he'd send *Daniel* to the Den, or change the Decree.

Peaf. 1. The Answer was very odd.

Peaf. 2. Truly this is a very hard Case; For 'twill be hard upon *Belteshazzar*, if he dies for worshipping his God; and 'twill be hard upon us, if we are all in Arms upon the King's refusing to punish him.

Peaf. 3.

Peaf. 3. 'Tis generally believ'd that he will preserve his Honour, and his Interest in his Subjects.

Peaf. 2. No doubt he will.

Peaf. 3. Will you take a Turn towards the Lions Den? There is a great Number of People expecting to see the Prince led thither.

Peaf. 1. With all my heart.

Peaf. 2. I must be excus'd.

Peaf. 1. Why Friend, this is such a Sight as we may never see again.

Peaf. 2. I wish you may not. The Thing is so shocking to me, that I don't know how to bear the Thoughts of it; much less could I see an innocent Man, fallen into so deep a Distress, from that Height of Honour and Power.

Peaf. 1. 3. Farewel then. [to the 2d *Peaf.*

Peaf. 2. Farewel, Neighbour.



Scene Belteshazzar's House.

Belteshazzar. Ariston. Shalam. Shemaiah. Serainb.

Belt. MY dearest Friends, what could support us now,
But the fair Prospect of those blissful Realms,
Where are no Pangs of Woe, no Sighs, and Tears,
No gloomy Night,— but everlasting Day?
That joyous Day, methinks, begins to dawn
Within my Soul.—The Moments flee apace;

I soon

68. BELTESHAZZAR; or,

I soon shall know my Lot.—The Message comes.

[Letter brought, open'd, and read.]

The King sends word, that nothing will destroy
Th' Impressions my Discourse left on his Mind,
That in an Hour he's promis'd to declare
His final Resolution to the Princes ;
And that he'll in the end approve himself
My faithful Friend: But then, withall, he says,
Which is, I own, to me a Contradiction,
He would not have me be at all surpriz'd,
If Messengers should lead me to the Den
To tarry there a Night ; for in the Morn
I shall return in Health. I would not judge
Too hard——but surely, thus the Case must stand.
The King has found that all Attempts are vain
To save my Life, unless he'll risque his Crown ;
His Thirst for Glory will not suffer this ;
Yet he's asham'd to own, that he has lost
His Resolution, and he judges truly,
I can't upbraid him with his Breach of Promise ;
So tells me I shall live, decrees my Death.

Ser. My Lord, I own my Judgment is the same.

Shem. And so is mine ; to me the Case is plain.

Shall. I from the first, my Friends, expected this.

Belt. Be not disconsolate, my dearest Love, [to Ari-
stone, pensive.

Nor please thy self with Hopes that I shall live:
But cheerfully resign me up to Heaven,
And let thy Conduct shew the noble Views
By which thou 'rt acted ; think, celestial Guards
Are plac'd around thee to support thy Mind,

In

In this important Season of thy Life.

Arist. Thy Mind is all compos'd, my dearest Lord;
O! With the Thoughts of that most perfect Bliss
To which thou 'rt going, mix thy fervent Prayers,
That *everlasting Arms* may be my Stay.

Belt. They will, my Love.—— The Time is now at
hand. [*Enter Messengers.*

Welcome, my Friends; I know your Business with me.

Arist. O! My dear Lord!—— [*Weeping.*

Belt. Weep not, my Love, the Heroine now display;
[*Embracing her.*

Call up thy wonted Courage, Patience, Hope,
And ev'ry noble Principle within,
With utmost Vigour, to exert themselves.
And let the Rays of all thy heavenly Charms,
Shot thick around me, light me thro' this dark,
This awful Scene, to my eternal Home.

My faithful tender Friends, take this Farewel. [*Embracing
his Friends.*

I'm going now to die for that great Cause,
Which God will surely own, and ere 'tis long,
Most gloriously revive. Believe his Word;
Invoke his sacred Name with Constancy;
For he has never said to *Jacob's Seed*,
Seek ye my Face in vain.

My *Aristone*, [*Embracing Aristone.*
Once more farewell;—— farewell;—— but not for ever.

A few so quick revolving Days will bring
My virtuous Consort to those happy Realms,
Where I, some Minutes hence, shall safe arrive.

Come,

70 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

Come now, my Guides, lead on; for I'm prepar'd [*To the
Messengers.*]

To follow, and receive my expected Doom.
Vain World, I'm leaving all thy real Woes,
Thy airy Pleasures, Trifles to the Soul
That once has tasted the celestial Streams:
These Streams of pure Delight more plenteous flow
Into my Heart, the nearer I approach
That sure Destruction, which awaits this Frame
Of Flesh and Blood, excite my warmest Wishes,
To reach the Fountain Head; there shall I drink
Thro' endless Ages, and be satisfy'd.

No Monarch, on his Coronation-Day,
While shouting Subjects their glad Homage pay,
While the Imperial Diadem he wears,
Views all its Glories, over-looks its Cares,
Can of such rapt'rous Pleasures be possess,
As those I feel within my glowing Breast,
Who have just reach'd the World of perfect Peace,
and Rest.



Scene



Scene Belteshazzar's House.

Sballum. SHEMAIAB. SERAIAB.

Shall. **B**Efore this time, my Friends, the noble Prince
Has reach'd the Goal ; and tho' we all lament,
Have greatest reason to lament his Death ;
'Tis sure our Honour, may be our Advantage,
That he so bravely own'd the Jewish Cause.

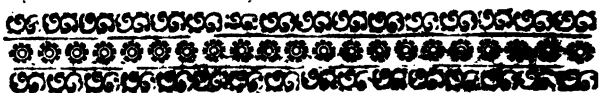
Sbem. Calm, and unmov'd with Fear, he march'd along,
His shining Face o'erspread with graceful Smiles,
That spoke the Transports of his pious Heart ;
As tho' he had some mighty Conquest gain'd,
And was returning back with glorious Spoils.

Ser. The weeping Multitude, with Wonder struck,
Profess'd they never saw so great a Hero,
And said, 'twas pity this should be his Fate.

Sbem. None but the few that envy'd him, because
He quite eclips'd them, could without Regret
Think on his Fall.

Ser. And there may come a Time,
When they unpy'd, with black Horrour fill'd,
Shall suffer the Demerit of their Crimes.

Sballum.



Shallum. Shemaiah. Seraiah. Aristone.

Shall. **O**! *Aristone*, we are all thy Friends,
Who would ~~would~~ with, comfort, and support
thee.

Arist. Alas! What dismal Clouds hang all around me!
[Weeping.

Shem. We can't be ignorant of the pressing Load,
Which bows thee down, and makes thy Tears to flow.

Arist. To think the Man I lov'd far more than Life,
Whose Smiles made all my Days so sweetly pass,
They seem'd but Moments to my ravi'd Soul,
Is rent from my Embraces, thrown too Lions;
His Flesh all torn, devour'd by hungry Beasts,
His Bones all sever'd, broken! Oh!——

Shem. O! For some Balm to heal her wounded Mind!

Ser. Consider, lovely Fair, where his bright Soul
Has gain'd Admittance; what he sees, and hears
Without the grosser Organ of the Sense.
Ten Thousand Crowns which scepter'd Princes wear
Would not invite him down again to Earth.
No, not to thy Embraces, tho' he lov'd——

Arist. With such an Ardour that one would have thought,
He had been some Seraph cloth'd with mortal Flesh.

Ser. And will most tenderly regard thee still.
As sep'rate Spirits of the Virtuous do
Their best-lov'd Friends, whom they have left below.

Think,

Think, *Aristone*, that he views thee now,
With eager Wishes for thy lasting Weal;
That thou may'st follow him in all that's noble,
Worthy the Relict of so great a Prince.

Arist. Thy Words, *Seraiab*, cheer my drooping Heart,
Which was, alas ! almost o'er-power'd with Grief.
—Yes, my dear Lord, I'll view thee on thy Throne, [*Looks*
Amidst the Powers that rule in Light unmix'd; *ing up.*
And wait in hope to see the joyful Day,
When thou, and I, fix'd in those blissful Realms,
Shall share in Empire, ne'er to be destroy'd.
Thy Precepts I'll with constant Care review ;
Thy bright Example shall employ my Thoughts ;
All my Concern shall be to follow thee.



Aristone. Sballum. Shemaiab. Seraiab. Messenger.

Mess. I Come from King *Darius*, to inform
These faithful, mourning Friends of *Beltesbazzar*,
That tho' they've thought his Master was unkind,
False to his Word, they'll find it otherwise.

Arist. What dost thou mean ? Is not my Lord consum'd ?
Is he not ravish'd from my tender Arms,
That us'd t' embrace him, but must now no more ?

Mess. No, *Aristone*, 'twas the King's Resolve,
To save your Lord, and hazard all his Empire.

G

But

But when he went from Council, this was spoke,
 As with an human Voice, I am the God.
 Whom thou, *Darius*, lately didst invoke;
 I fram'd all Nature by my powerful Hand,
 And rule without Controul in Heaven, and Earth.
 A Proof of this, which can admit no Doubt,
 By Morning-Light I'll to thy Eyes afford.
 The Vision must be secret; for I'll shew,
 In the Behaviour of this virtuous Man,
 And those whom he has chosen for his Friends,
 What Power I have to animate the Good,
 Encompassed with Dangers, and with Woes,
 Which drive the Wicked into fell Despair.
 But I will surely bring him forth alive;
 I'll hold the hungry Lions in my Chain,
 And they shall wait for those, who have deserv'd
 To fall their Prey, *Daniel's* relentless Foes.

Arist. I am astonish'd, and can scarce believe
 The Tidings thou hast brought.

Mess. Further, the King
 Requires you'd meet him now without delay,
 Before the Den, that there you may receive
 The joyful Confirmation.

Shall. I'm quite lost
 In Wonder and Surprise!

Arist. Am I awake?
 Or is it all a Dream?

Ser. This could not be
 A Fiction; for we know, the King has none
 To fear, nor needs to covet our Regard.

Shem.

Shem. Besides, unless he were assur'd th' Event
Would answer, he'd not choose to meet us there.

Arist. Come then, my Friends, let's hasten towards the
Den.

Thou God, whose piercing Eye sees all Events,
Prepare me to receive my Lord again;
Or to be Witness the dire Stroke is past,
Which has bereav'd me of all earthly Joys.



Scene Pref. 2d's House.

Pref. 2. Pref. 3. Prince 1. Prince 2:

Pref. 2. **N**OW all is safe, my Friends, for long ere this,
The savage Beasts have quite devour'd our Foe.

Pref. 3. I thought, indeed, our Scheme had been destroy'd;
Darius in the Council seem'd resolv'd
Rather to hazard all, than give up *Daniel*.

Prince 1. He view'd again the royal Diadem.
That grac'd his Brows, and priz'd it more than Friendship.

Prince 2. Now, now, my Lords, the long-wish'd Time
is come;

There is no hated Rival to succeed,
None that the King can better trust than us.

Pref. 2. I have not slept for Joy of our Success.

Pref. 3. I've been impatient for Return of Day,
That we our selves, repairing to the Den,
Might have the certain Proofs of *Daniel's* Fall.

G 2.

Pref. 2:

76 BELTESHAZZAR; or,

Pres. 2. Behold, the darksome Night departs apace,
The Morn begins to ope' her golden Gates,
That the bright Sun may run his wonted Race.
Now we may go, my Friends, and view the Place
Vacant, where late he lay; but stain'd, perhaps,
With Blood that issu'd from his mangled Limbs.



Pres. 2. Pres. 3. Prince 1. Prince 2. Pres. 2's Wife.
Pres. 2's Wife. **A** Las! My Lord, here is a Troop of Sol-
diers,
And Men who say, they come from King *Darius*,
To make us Prisoners, 'till he shall declare
His further Pleasure!

Pres. 2. It cannot be; thy Fancy is disturb'd.
Wife. You'll soon be undeceiv'd. [*Enter Messengers.*]
Pres. 3. Now, what I fear'd,
From first to last in this unhappy Business,
Is come upon us, and we're all undone!



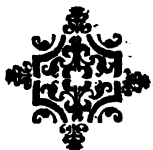
Pres. 2. Pres. 3. Prince 1. Prince 2. Pres. 2's Wife.
Messengers.
Mess. **T**HUS says the mighty King *Cyaxeres*
To you, who most inhumanly have sought
The Blood of *Beltesbazzar*, nor would hear

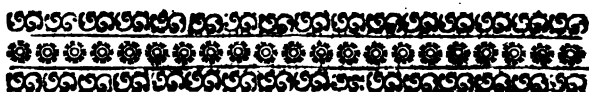
The

Th' Entreaties of a Monarch in Distress,
That pleaded for his Life, you now shall feel
The Weight of his Displeasure: So ordains
The God, who has preserv'd your Rival's Life.

Pref. 2. Farewel then, all our Joys, and Hopes, at once;
Nothing awaits us now but Shame, and Death!
Thus the mistaken Traveller sets out,
Pleas'd to behold the Heavens serene and fair;
When lo! an unexpected, pitchy Cloud
Darkens their Face, and pours a dreadful Storm
Of Thunder, Rain, and Light'ning on his Head:
With Terrour struck, in vain he seeks for Shelter;
The Light'ning blasts him, down he sinks to Dust!

Pref. 3. Alas! What wracking Pains I feel within,
Now the great Tryal's come!——To be depriv'd,
In the sweet Morn of Life, of all my Joys,
Nipp'd, like the early Blossoms, by the Frost——
To close my Eyes so soon in Death's black Shades——
More dreadful still, if there's an After-State,
As much I fear there is!—— Alas! My Crimes
Sit heavy on my Soul!—— Ye Powers above,
Let me find Mercy, when I shoot the Gulph!





Scene before the Den.

Darius. Mandane. Arifone. Sballum. Sbemaiah. Seraiah.

Dar. SEE, *Arifone*, see thy noble Lord [Pointing
to Daniel at the Mouth of the Den.

Safe in the Den, with those fierce Beasts of Prey!
Behold his Thoughts, and Prayers alone ascend
To Heav'n's bright World; he still remains below,
Again to fold thee in his loving Arms! [King unseals
the Den, and Belteshazzar comes out.

Prince *Belteshazzar*, now thy King is come [To Belteshaz.
To set thee free: Thou dost not understand
The Reason of my Conduct.

Belt. Yes, my Sovereign,
The Mystery is all unfolded now:
For I no sooner set my Feet within
The Den, than I beheld a Blaze of Light
Diffus'd around me; strait I threw my self
Upon my Knees, resign'd my Soul to Heav'n:
But lo! The Savages were struck with Fear,
And durst not quit their Place; they quak'd, and couch'd;
I rais'd my Eyes, and saw a shining Form,
A Cherub, who in Countenance appear'd
Majestic, yet most kind, and condescending.

He

He chas'd away the Mists which had obscur'd
 These great Events, and wrapp'd them all in Darkness;
 Shaw'd how on solid Wisdom they were built,
 And in the end would turn to thine, to mine,
 To ev'ry one's Account; but theirs who sought
 My Ruin. Yet I'd humbly plead for these,
 Were not Heav'n's Will declar'd about their Fate;
 My Prince should condescend to spare their Lives.
 My dearest *Aristone*! [*Embracing Aristone.*

Arist. My dear Lord!

My Wonder's equal to my vast Delight!

[*Embracing his Friends.*

Shem. Prince *Beltshazzar*, this is Joy indeed!

Belt. The Will of Heav'n, be sure, is always best:
 I went with Triumph, as I thought, to Death;
 But since I was mistaken, I'm content
 Longer to feel the Carts, and Grievs of Life,
 Till my Creator shall release me hence.

Ser. Merely for thy Advantage none could wish
 Thy Stay on Earth; but we, who love our selves,
 Who love the common Cause must needs desire,
 That many Years be added to thy Life,
 And that thou may'st be like the mellow Fruit,
 Which hangs secure, until it drops with Age.

Dar. Order the Prisoners to be brought before me.



[*Enter*



[*Enter Guards with the Prisoners.*]

Dar. **G**O, lead these Criminals to instant Death;
Thrust them, without Delay, into the Den:
But if they've e'er a God, who can defend
Like *Daniel's* God, him also I'll adore;
And they shall still enjoy their wonted Honours.

Pres. 3. O great *Darius*, let thy Bowels yearn [*Falling
down with the Princes and Women.*

Towards those who sue for Mercy, at thy Feet,
With deep Contrition for their past Offence.

Dar. Mercy has nought to plead on your Behalf:
For cruel Envy reigns within your Breasts.
You dare be wicked; but you would not taste
The bitter Fruits of these your heinous Crimes.

Pres. 2. As for my self, O King, I would not live,
To be the Slave of my successful Foe.
But wherefore must my Wife and Children suffer?

Dar. Because they are Offenders; they have wish'd
To shed the Blood of this our valu'd Friend.
I'm well inform'd each one I've doom'd to Death
Industriously has sought the Prince's Fall.

Pres. 2's Wife. Heav'n knows, dread Sovereign, how we
have desir'd
He might escape; and since he has receiv'd

No

No Damage, sure we may obtain Forgiveness.

Dar. If you desir'd his Life, 'twas then alone,
When Fear produc'd th' Effect : His Death, you thought,
Might ruin those who had awak'd my Wrath.
No longer therefore argue ; you shall die
Without Delay. Guards take away your Prisoners.



Darius. Mandane. Beltesbazzar. Aristane. and Friends.

Dar. **N**OW; *Daniel* ; now, my Friends, you all shall
see,

My future Conduct will agree with this.

Belt. We doubt it not, my Prince.

Dar. Then let me not

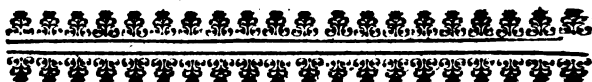
Behold your cheerful Smiles so soon exchang'd
For Pensiveness, as tho' your Joys were fled.

Belt. Think not, my Prince, we want Respect, or Love
To such a King ; But soft Compassion works
Towards our distressed Foes, altho' they shew'd
To us no Favour.

Dar. O ! Glorious Patterns of sincere Good-will !
Who would not have such Men for cordial Friends,
That treat their Foes with this Humanity ?



Darius



Darius. Mandane. Belteshazzar. Aristone.
Friends, and Messenger.

Mess. **A**ccording to thy Charge, O King *Darius*,
 The Criminals were led unto the Den ;
 As soon as they advanc'd within the Door,
 Behold, the Lions rose, and, with fierce Looks,
 Seiz'd them at once, and tore them all in pieces.

Dar. Then, *Belteshazzar*, it shall be ordain'd,
 And publish'd thro' the Land, yea, all my Realms,
 That God, the living God be hence ador'd :
 He only has unbounded Power, and Love,
 Which shine most brightly in the View of those,
 Who own his Greatness, and revere his Name.

When Evil threatens to invade the Good,
 Evil that seems too great to be withstood,
 Virtue's their Safety ; Lo ! It drives away
 The dreadful Gloom, brings unexpected Day :
 Then in these Paths let all with Courage tread,
 Make Vice the only Object of their Dread.



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